

The image shows a close-up of a marbled paper pattern, likely from an old book. The pattern consists of dense, repeating, wavy, and swirling lines in shades of red, green, and yellow/gold on a light background. The pattern is visible across the entire frame, with a dark, possibly black, triangular corner visible in the top right and bottom right. A small white label is affixed to the bottom left corner.

LP
F
5012
1869
H951

8 **Huntington** (Hon. Lucius Seth) *The Independence of Canada: the*
Annual Address delivered before the Agricultural Society of the County of Missisquoi at
Bedford, Sept. 8, 1869, 8vo., 14 pp., half calf, *inscribed "With Mr. Huntington's compts.,"*
1869 *Montreal, 1869*

The speaker advocated Independence for a long time. He was later President of the Council and
Postmaster-General of Canada.

The EDITH and LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

150~

1061

3828r



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

8, 10. 11. Mr. Huntington's Compl.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF CANADA.

THE

ANNUAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF THE COUNTY
OF MISSISQUOI, AT BEDFORD, SEPT. 8, 1869.

BY THE

HON. L. S. HUNTINGTON, Q. C.,
M. P. for the County of Shefford.

Montreal:

HERALD STEAM PRESS, 51 AND 53 ST. JAMES STREET.

1869.



THE INDEPENDENCE OF CANADA.

THE ANNUAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF THE COUNTY OF
; MISSISQUOI. AT BEDFORD, SEPT. 8, 1869.

BY THE

HON. L. S. HUNTINGTON, Q. C.,
M. P. for the County of Shefford.

Montreal :

HERALD STEAM PRESS, 51 AND 53 ST. JAMES STREET.

1869.

50/18

John Mappin

June 1912 £ 183.00

THE INDEPENDENCE OF CANADA.

— 0 —

SIR,—

In England it is the custom for public men to seize the occasion of great gatherings of the people to address them upon public affairs. I humbly invoke that custom and your kind forbearance while I address to you some observations upon what I consider the great question of the day. I made some remarks in the same sense in Parliament at its last session, and was honoured with a good deal of unfriendly criticism, and I am sure you will forgive me, if I improve the first favourable occasion for restating my opinions with some arguments in their support. I may premise that there is neither disloyalty nor indelicacy in bringing to your notice, a subject, which deeply interests this country—which has been discussed both in our own and in the British Parliament—and generally by the Press in both countries—and which I firmly believe is the necessary complement of the great scheme of confederation we have accomplished. It is true that in my humble way, I opposed that scheme in great part, because I was timid about the early assumption of sovereignty, which I thought I foresaw, then, must follow. I stated in my place in Parliament, after the coalition of '64, that confederation, if it should really prove, what its promoters pretended, an antidote to annexation, was the first step towards the independence of the country. But opposition was useless, for confederation was the policy of the Empire; and Imperial influence is always too powerful for Colonial dissent. I have accepted the situation in its fullest sense, as faithfully and loyally as if I had originally promoted it. But, the first step having been taken, I see dangers in delay, and I believe it is expedient to take measures for the severance of our present relations to the Empire. This is a momentous step and requires grave consideration. It must create differences of opinion and the broadest tolerance should be accorded to discussion. I propose to speak candidly and dispassionately. I have no party battles to fight nor personal preferences to gratify. Holding strong opinions as to the future of this country, I submit them frankly for the verdict of my countrymen. Sooner or later the weight of opinion—the majority, must rule. I am prepared to accept the decision and loyally abide by its consequences. Such service as I can render will be cheerfully rendered, whether

my country remains a province or becomes an Independent State. And I profess and feel profound respect for those who honestly dread the great change we are discussing. Foremost among the barriers to our progress towards a nationality, is that noble sentiment of loyalty to the British Crown, which has so generally and so happily subsisted among the great masses of our people. Can we forget our noble Queen? Can we dissociate ourselves from the glories and the traditions of the Empire? British Citizenship is no idle word, and what could we create for ourselves to surpass it? For a century the affectionate colonial eye has rested from afar upon the British Throne, as the centre of power, protection and glory. We have venerated the Old Land, with a far off colonial adoration,—we have borrowed her thoughts, leaned upon her opinion, and conscious of the plenitude of her effulgence, we have been proud to shine through her reflected light. England has been the land of our dreams; even distance lent her enchantment and Englishmen to us were a superior race. We have been proud of the Old Flag; not indeed, feeling under it, an equality with the Sea Kings, but assured of its protection, in the listless life of dependence which colonists lead. We knew if great danger should threaten, that Flag would float over us; stayed by an arm stronger than ours, which we could not control; and that ours would be neither the duty nor the glory of upholding it. But dependence begets trust; and to confide in a generous people is to admire and love them. Can all this trustfulness, this affection and loyalty be torn ruthlessly away? It deserves at least respect and tender treatment. But it might not be wise to jeopardize the great future of our young country, for the sake of even so noble a sentiment, as the Hindoo widow sacrificed her life upon the funeral pile. Governments in our time, are ordained for the happiness and the prosperity of the people, and if it can be shown that the virtues of selfreliance and national Manhood—habits of original thought—a condition of equality with the nations of the earth—an immense preponderance of material advantage may be safely and permanently secured by a friendly change in our relations to the Empire; perhaps loyalty to the Dominion might come to overshadow the wide-spread sentiment of loyalty to the crown. The

child nestles with fond dependence to the parental heart; one by one his habits of self-confidence are acquired as childhood merges into youth or manhood approaches. When at last the age of majority is reached, filial affection is not quenched, because the days of dependence are over. Nor could we plead the tenderness of the tie as an excuse for perpetual childhood. It is from such a point of view that the London "Times" speaks of Canada as "The eldest son of England."

But there are those who believe that the Independence of Canada would conflict with the Colonial policy of the Empire, and who, taking their inspirations from the traditions of the past, make England's glory to consist in the vastness of her colonial possessions. The motto of "Ships, Colonies and Commerce" belongs to an age that is past. Its mention summons the ghost of the old act of Navigation, and the celebrated 29 Acts of Parliament, for the maintenance of a Commercial Monopoly—"like melancholy ghosts of dead renown." It was a system of obstruction and restriction to Colonial enterprise, in which the Colonies were regarded as mere contributors to the wealth and glory of the parent State. Freedom has made rapid strides in England since those days, political economy has been remodelled, and political arithmetic has achieved new systems of calculation. England did not find that the loss of her original American Colonies dwarfed her industries, crippled her commerce or blighted her prestige as a nation. They have grown to be a greater people and more profitable customers. The young Colonies relieved from the restraints of tutelage espoused great principles and upheld them, thus ensuring their own greatness and, incidentally, the elevation of universal mankind. Englishmen have watched with a careful eye the progress of their kinsmen in the untried field of freedom and equality. Slowly and cautiously they have copied what seemed to be success, and have been warned of the distinctions between liberty and license; and thus for nearly a century the two great nations foremost in their devotions to the principles of popular freedom and constitutional government, have been a constant example and encouragement to each other. Sometimes there have been rivalries and estrangement. Quarrels among kinsmen are oftentimes bitter and unreasonable, but the friends of peace and freedom have trusted, not in vain, to that palladium of common principles, which both peoples have cherished; and thus it has happened that the dismemberment of the Empire, which the matchless eloquence of Chatham and Burke foretold and deprecated, and honest but stubborn old George the Third believed impossible, has proved a great commercial and political blessing to England and the world. The old motto meant after all, nothing more than, "ships,

markets and commerce," and these, under the new relations of the colonies have been multiplied a hundred fold.

Now let us like men of nerve and comprehension apply this lesson to ourselves. What benefit are we to England? From what we have seen, it is manifest, that our sovereign independence would enhance our own growth and resources, and multiply the advantages she could derive from our trade. The commercial argument therefore from an English point of view is against the connection, and this is why our enemies affect to despise it. But how are we otherwise useful? Are we a source of strength to her in war? Do we recruit her armies and navies, or, failing to supply men, do we pour our means into her military coffers? We do not even afford a field for the political patronage of the British administration of the day, and there remains to England therefore, but the doubtful pretiges of nominal rule over vast American possessions. What wonder, that Englishmen are growing cold to this advantage, when they reflect upon the prodigality of blood and treasure it may one day cost them to maintain it? Faithful to her glorious traditions, England will act no dishonourable part towards us while we remain a portion of the Empire. Her oft reiterated promise to defend us in case of war, she will fulfill with her last man and her last dollar. But the obligation is not the less an embarrassment because it is binding. And the more far seeing of her statesmen for the last fifty years, have looked towards a change of the conditions which imposed it. Step by step, in all the noble and unprecedented concessions they have accorded us, we have been led gently and cautiously, towards the paths of manhood and self-reliance; and they have explained to the British people, as they watched this problem, of a free government, growing out of their colonial jurisdiction, that the Colonial State was not what Burke called it, a "perpetual minority," but must expand into sovereign and independent powers. In the great Confederation debate of '65, the Hon. John Hilliard Cameron the leader of the high Tories of Upper Canada, declared, in denouncing the doctrines of the Manchester school, that Canada derives no important benefits from her connection with Great Britain, except in the matter of defence.

With this honest declaration of an untainted Conservative chief, I propose to open a brief discussion of the question. What benefit is England to Canada? I speak as to the future, and I am not unmindful of her generosity in the past, and the great heritage of free institutions she has bequeathed to us. These were our birthright, but a less magnanimous provincial policy would have denied them to us as Colonists. Sovereign or dependent, Canada will cherish for all time, a grateful

memory of England's gentle and benignant rule over us, while she taught us the lessons of constitutional government. For all time, too, wherever our great populations are descended from her noble stock, we shall cherish the pride of kindred, shall claim our share in the glories of her literature, her martial prowess, and her commercial triumphs. But these rights are not to us an exclusive heritage, and we but hold them in common with the descendants, all over the world, of the great Foster-mother of nations; and I am enquiring after the special advantages of the connection. These are not to be found in our commercial intercourse, for here we are left to compete against the world. It is not that her abundant capital, attracted by our loyalty and affection, flows in upon us because we are a dependency; to develop our resources, and to awaken the hum of industry along our shores; for that capital seeks only a safe return of its investments, and is oftener drawn where it is better rewarded, among strangers. It is not that the prestige of the connection gives us a position among the peoples of the earth; for our powers are merely local and municipal, and bear the taint of inferiority and dependence. There remains, therefore, but the one advantage, and we end, as Mr. Cameron began for us,—the advantage of the connection is narrowed to the solitary matter of defence; and we shall see, as we proceed, that even this is of doubtful utility. Defence presupposes attack, which we have only to dread from our republican neighbours. But, the difficulties with them, are always of an Imperial character. The Trent affair, the Alabama claims, and the Irish Fenian quarrel with England, were all as foreign to us as the China Seas, and interested us only in their consequences. It is not true that the same may be said of Liverpool or Dublin for a hundred reasons; but especially, because they are part of the British Isles, and are represented in the British Parliament. We have no voice and cannot influence the foreign policy of the empire. There is only for us the duty of waiting till war is declared, and the luxury of becoming the field of blood, the theatre of desolation. Thus England would defend us, but from what, but the consequences of her own quarrels? We have no occasion for dangerous controversy with our neighbours on our own account. Our interests are blended with theirs, and tend to mutual comity and good will, and the dangers of conflict will be a thousand fold removed when British entanglements are avoided. This fact has been again and again admitted by British Statesmen. During the debate in the House of Commons on the defences in 1865, Mr. S. Fitzgerald declared, that if Canada were independent, there would be no cause of quarrel between her and the United States. That it could be only through a desire to strike at England, that America would

attack us. Canadians had not permitted the Alabama to escape or precipitately acknowledged belligerent rights, and there could be no cause of quarrel, except that she was united to England; and his belief was, that if Canada were independent to-morrow, she would not run the slightest danger of a contest. Mr. Cardwell adverted to that speech, as one, against whose tone the Government could make no complaint, and the sentiment was received with the approving hear, hears, of the House. In the same debate Mr. Bright, whose views have not changed, and who is a power in England at this moment, declared, that should any occasion to defend us arise, it would not result from anything done by us, but would be a war growing out of the relations between the Cabinets of London and Washington.

It is true that in case of war, we should be no match for the power of our neighbours. But our dependence would be in the right and in the comity of nations. There is no reason to fear that they would be aggressive. Mexico, Cuba, the South American States have maintained their autonomy without molestation. And besides, as Mr. Cameron suggested the other day, there would probably be little difficulty in arranging for a British and American protectorate.

It is to be regretted of course, that a portion of the American press, adopt a disagreeable and sensational tone upon this subject, and it suits the views of certain journals here to give these utterances an unnecessary prominence. They preach, of course, the manifest destiny of annexation, and they laugh at our Independence, as impossible of maintenance for six months after its achievement. They say, it is impossible for two peoples, of the same race and language to live alongside, without the absorption of the smaller by the greater. This is mere rapid assertion. The experiment of course was never tried, because the prescribed conditions were wanting. But what did these peoples preach, about the Southern Confederacy? Did they not prate loudly of her power to sustain a national existence? And though she failed after prodigies of valour and skill; what reasonable man doubts, that, could she have achieved her independence, she might subsequently have maintained it? Yet, the South was far behind us in her appreciation of freedom, and the true elements of a nation's greatness. It is only poor Canada which is to be sneered and jeered, into clinging to a system of tutelage and inferiority for ever. It was not the fashion to disparage her resources and poh, poh, her aspirations, when the Hon. George Brown, in his Confederation speech spread out the map and invited the House, to an enthusiastic study of her magnificent geography. He traced the island of Newfoundland, and found it equal in extent, to the kingdom of

Portugal. Crossing the straits to the main lands, the hospitable shores of Nova Scotia, stretched out to the dimensions of the kingdom of Greece. New Brunswick was equal in extent to Denmark and Switzerland combined. Lower Canada was a Country as large as France, and Upper Canada, twenty thousand miles larger than Great Britain and Ireland put together. Across the continent to the shores of the Pacific was British Columbia, the land of Golden promise, and comparable in extent to the Austrian Empire; and then the Indian territories which lie between, were greater in extent than the whole soil of Russia. There were, be said, in Europe forty-eight Sovereign States and only eleven with a population greater than ours. In 1871, we were to stand equal in population to the ninth Sovereign State of Europe. The Honourable Gentleman further told the House, that in 1793, the Commerce of the Sovereign and Independent United States, their exports and imports did not amount to one third of what ours did at that moment, and there were few States in Europe and those with vastly greater population than our own, that could boast of anything like the foreign commerce passing through our hands. And France, though the third maritime power of the world, owned only 60,000 tons more of shipping than British America. Then, the Dominion, whether for industry or defence, would muster a force of 70,000 seamen, and in round numbers, 700,000 men capable of bearing arms. These are not the qualities of a country unfit for self-government and whose future need bear the taint of inferiority and dependence. I have said that Independence is the natural sequence of the theories which promoted Confederation. Lord Monck alluded to it as involving a "New Nationality," when he first referred to it in a speech from the Throne. British Statesmen have invariably discussed it as a step in the transition our institutions were undergoing. The events of the American War, and the attendant possibilities of a rupture with that Country, forced upon the attention of the British Government the question of the defence of their possessions on this Continent. They promoted the scheme from an Imperial point of view; and with reference to immediate relief from the embarrassments of their responsibilities here. I cannot better express my view of the attitude they assumed than by quoting from the "True Witness" of March, 1867, one of the best written Journals on this Continent, and understood to be an organ of the Lower Canada Catholic Clergy. The writer says:—"We understand that the Bill for the Union of the B. N. A. Provinces has been rapidly carried through the three readings in the House of Lords. In all probability it will meet the same fate in the House of Commons; for in England public sentiment is

very strong in favour of a measure which is looked upon as preliminary to the severance of a political connection, not profitable, and often very dangerous to the people of Great Britain. Some changes have been made in the Quebec scheme, apparently at the request of the delegates themselves, since we may well believe that in the Imperial Legislature the feeling towards these Provinces is a desire to get rid of them altogether as honourably and as speedily as possible. They profit Great Britain neither materially nor morally. * * * * *

All that remains for Great Britain is to get rid of her North American Provinces as speedily and with as little loss of moral prestige as possible. The so-called Confederation of these Provinces presents the means for accomplishing this, and it is therefore eagerly grasped at by men of all parties." There is no doubt that more or less directly, such views were urged upon our delegates, while the negotiations were proceeding in England. Indeed so determined were all parties there to hurry through the arrangements, that the most solemn remonstrances of its colonial opponents were treated with almost universal and contumacious neglect. And the views of the statesmen as might be expected are quietly reflected among the people of England. All the organs of opinion, the popular *Times*, the *Radical Star* and the *Tory Standard*, the stately *Saturday Review* and the snobbish *Pall Mall Gazette*, with their satellites all over the Kingdom adopt the same tone; either that Canada is an encumbrance to England or they are ready to promote her independence to-morrow; and every colonist with whom you speak and who has had the entre to British Society will tell you that the same feeling pervades the British mind. Adam Smith wrote that no dominant country could ever voluntarily relinquish its power over a dependency. But he regarded the abandonment in the light of a sacrifice, and in our case England has already abandoned all the patronage which, in his view, was a temptation to retain dominant power. But Mr. Cornwall Lewis who wrote later and after modern Colonial views began to permeate England, regarded as probable, that a parent state, deriving no advantage from a dependency and believing that the dependency was able and willing to form an independent state, might abandon its authority for the want of a sufficient inducement to retain it. There might even be positive reasons for its withdrawal,—as if the dependency contributes nothing to the commercial facilities of the dominant country, is a source of expense to the Supreme Government—and may involve the dominant country in war; and he further says, that if the parent state understands its true relation to the dependency it will voluntarily recognize independence when there is fitness to maintain it; will prepare those for Independence who are

still unable to stand alone; and will seek rather to promote its trade, than its Empire. Englishmen believe that we are able to fulfil all these conditions and they are cautiously but persistently pressing the responsibility upon us. Need we hesitate to take the hint and prepare to assume it? Are our public men too timid to lead the people up to the great work which is before them? Are they blind to the signs of the times or are they seeking to encourage the people in blindness? It is, time that every Canadian should comprehend the attitude which England is assuming; and that he should calmly and dispassionately admit there is method in the madness she is accused of. We have seen that in a commercial sense or in a sense of military or national *prestige*, she derives no advantage from the connection. We have seen, that there is mutual disadvantage—unmistakeable danger to the mother and the child, in the relations subsisting between them. How long ought we to hesitate and temporize? How long can we afford to cultivate blindness to our true position, and go on simulating an importance which is deceitful and visionary. The change must come and it is only manful to prepare for it. It is childish to underrate ourselves or the duties that await us. There are dangers in delay and it is our duty to face the grave aspect of the position. As we have seen, the interest and the policy of the Imperial Government are unmistakeable. Tory and Radical seem for once in accord. No doubt the responsibility of ministers in England, the delicacies of party relations, the anxiety of one side to retain office and of the other side to obtain it, may temper imperial tactics and stimulate caution and reserve. It may be that even yet a skilful appeal to the dead past of the old colonial policy might rouse a spirit of resistance among the British masses. There may be some who still believe that the perpetual minority of the Colonies is essential to the glory of the Empire: as there are still some who cherish the traditionary faith that one Englishman can whip two Frenchmen. This state of things may delay, but it cannot avert the crisis. There remains still the Colonial Policy—the unmistakeable hand writing on the wall. Even Sir John Young our chief Imperial officer, an able, astute, and experienced statesman, has not found it consistent with his high duties to be reticent upon this great question of the hour. Cautiously of course, as became his high office, but significantly as the representative of great Imperial interests here, he hints at the transition State, through which our Institutions are passing. He stated at Quebec and reiterated at Halifax, that Canadian statesmen and people are the best judges of their own interests; that their destinies were in their own hands and that if they decided upon some change, the proposition would re-

ceive from the statesmen and people of England, a generous and friendly consideration. His Excellency does not belong to that school of thinkers, who preach that pending the great consolidation here, further changes are not to be thought of. He does not tell us that, because Confederation is but half accomplished, we should shut our eyes to the future, and leave blind chance to accomplish the destinies of this Great Northern Dominion. He tells us indeed, in his Halifax speech, that he had been misrepresented at Quebec and that he had been made to talk of change of allegiance, when he only meant change of alliance. Nobody but the wilfully blind could have understood His Excellency otherwise. Nobody could have dreamed that a British Governor, would suggest to the people of half a continent under his rule, the cession of their territory to a foreign power. But His Excellency is too good a philologist not to understand the full purport of the words he discusses. Allegiance signifies the obligation of a subject to his Prince or Government—Alliance suggests original powers mutually exercised by the parties to a compact, and practically, therefore, allegiance ceases when alliance begins, and this view is quite consistent with Sir John Young's able speeches, as interpreted by himself. He simply did not intend to convey the idea that England would promote the annexation of this great country to the vast territories of our Republican neighbours, while at the same time he felt that the future had something nobler in store for us than the mere Colonial tutelage of our times. Hence he spoke of change from such a state; encouraged us, by reciting the example of Holland, with smaller territory and fewer resources; and cheered us with the promise of the perpetual good will of his Government and "alliance" with England the "mother of nations." The country owes a debt of gratitude to His Excellency, for this timely aid to the popular thought, for thus cautiously foreshadowing that brilliant future, whose effulgence has dazzled his timid ministers. It is moreover stated, upon what seems to be undoubted authority, that when it was first intimated to Sir A. T. Galt, that Her Majesty had it in contemplation, in view of his distinguished public services, to confer upon him the honour of knighthood, that gentleman took occasion to lay before the Executive, a statement, expressing his high sense of this great honour, but that he felt, he ought, before accepting it, to represent the strong views he entertained in favour of the early independence of this country. But Her Majesty's representative, found in this phase of opinion, no disqualification for Royal favour, and Her Majesty was graciously pleased to confer it. It would be fair to ask if Sir John Young did not mean to indicate independence, what did he mean? He could not have referred to

our representation in the British Parliament,—the only means by which we colonists could become the equals of our trans-Atlantic countrymen, and an impossible concession from the Imperial Government. If England were to admit the representatives of her millions of colonists to seats in the House of Commons, how long would she maintain her metropolitan and conservative dominance? How long before she must cease to consider colonial questions from an Imperial point of view, and find her children assuming the attitude of her masters? Such a solution of the colonial relationship is undesirable and impossible. Englishmen would never dream of it, and if they did, it would not meet our colonial wants. Perhaps it would be fair to interpret that speech in the light of Imperial opinion. It is not to be supposed, that His Excellency intended to start new and original theories. Let us believe him to have been in accord with the statesmen of his country and his time. In that great debate, from which I have quoted on the defences of this country, Mr. Disraeli alluded to the hypothesis of a desire on the part of Canada and the other North American Colonies, for independence; and to the hour when England might thus lose a dependency, but gain a firm ally and friend. And again, he said Canada has its own future before it. We have a right to assume it. It has all the elements which make a great nation. It has at this moment a strong development of nationality; and the full conviction on the part of England, that these provinces may ultimately become an independent country, is to her, not a source of mortification, but of pride. Mr. Bright in the same debate points out the reasons why Canadians should feel, if they are like other Englishmen, that it would be better for their Country to be disentangled from the politics of England, and to assume the position of an Independent State. He believed, from what had been stated by official gentlemen in the present Government, and in previous Governments, that there was no objection to the Independence of Canada whenever Canada might wish it. If Canada, by a friendly separation, became an Independent State, said Mr. Bright—choosing its own form of Government—Monarchical, if it liked a monarchy, or Republican, if it preferred a Republic, it would not be less friendly to England. And in case of war, Canada would then be a neutral Country, and her population enjoy greater security. In the same debate Lord Palmerston declared, that when the Provinces felt strong enough to stand alone, and desired the connection no longer, England would say "God speed you and give you the means to maintain yourselves as a nation." These general sentiments of the debate provoked no dissent in the House, where all shades of British opinion are represented. And though nobody

declared the time had come, England was manifestly shaping her policy to meet it. I shall pass over the stronger expressions, the advanced opinions of subsequent debates, because time does not permit me to produce a *repertoire* of all the discussions on this subject. But in the light of what has gone before, it is not easy to misunderstand the remarkable utterances of Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister of England, during the debate in the House of Commons the other day, upon the subject of guaranteeing the Hudson Bay Loan. Objections had been taken to the principal of Colonial guarantees, and Mr. Gladstone fully endorsed them. But he declared that this guarantee was given for a strictly Imperial object, to dissociate England from the inconvenience of too extensive territorial possessions. In former times, said Mr. Gladstone, the American Colonies were entangled in a vicious system of dependence on England. The Government wished to engender in them a spirit of Independence. They wished to wind up the old system and see the Colonies make a new start. That was not to be a beginning, but an end. Almost as I speak a confirmatory missive comes to us across the water,—one of the strangest, as it is one of the most important events of our time. The London "Times," by the last steamer, is handed me, containing a circular from a meeting of Colonists in London, expressing alarm at the new Imperial views of the Colonial relations and seeking to provide means of inducing the British Government to withdraw from its lately declared policy on the subject of colonial defence, or, failing in that, to demand to be released from their allegiance, and to adopt such further means as the exigencies of the new situation may require. The circular suggests a conference in London, during the next session of the Imperial Parliament, of delegates from all the Colonial Governments, and the *Times* vouches for the importance of the movement, which, it regards as an epoch, by the tone in which it discusses the whole question. That Journal, the most delicate thermometer of influential opinion in England, argues that the remonstrances will be fruitless and warns the Colonies to rely on their own Independence. From all this it appears that the attitude of England is sufficiently pronounced and comprehensible, and one of its effects will be, powerfully to modify and ripen colonial opinion. At first, no doubt, among our own people, we may witness bewilderment and surprise. Some will make it a pretext to advance preconceived opinions and others may at first turn from it in disgust; but in the end, the sober second thought of our countrymen, if the opportunity is afforded them, will grapple with the subject in a patriotic spirit and with a fair reference to its bearing upon the interests of both countries. In this spirit I propose to consider a little more fully the relations

of this subject to our Canadian interests and perhaps to extend in some further detail, points to which I have already adverted. There is a class of politicians and publicists among us, who pretend that until the great scheme of Confederation is perfected, the talk of further change is a fatal disturbance to the public mind. And in a despotic country, where popular opinion can be dispensed with, where all power rests with the Government, and the theories of free institutions are unknown, such a dictum might be tolerated. It would be consonant with such a view, to discourage thought, to forbid discussion and by all means to smother whatever should tend to promote an intelligent public sentiment among the people. They might learn to differ from the policy of their rulers and this might lead to disturbance and alienation. But such a pretension implies insult to a free people and indicates the apprehension of those who proclaim it, that they may cease to overshadow and control them. The Irish difficulties are as intricate as any of the embarrassments of our own position. Yet we did not hear that Mr Bright was forbidden to discuss the Land Question, until after the disestablishment had been perfected. The truth lies entirely in the opposite sense. It is the duty of public men, whose lives are devoted to the study of public questions, to discuss them before the people; that they may be educated to comprehend the great issues which involve the destinies of their country. These writers would conceal, while I would proclaim from the house tops, the stern facts of the situation. They would hush the popular interest—lull the spirit of enquiry,—while I, reposing ample faith in the honesty and patriotism of my countrymen, would excite the one, that I might lead the other, through the paths of intelligent research, to the haven of wise and profitable conclusions. Doubtless there is too much of disquiet in the public mind, but to discuss the position, is not to create it; and he must be a crazy thinker who can suppose, that in view of all the circumstances, the people are to look on without thought and without speech! But who is to control the impressions of the masses, to limit their thoughts, to curb their restless mental activities? The people are observant. In their own way they read the signs of the times, and among them the apprehension is almost universal, that we are on the eve of radical political changes. You and I, no doubt share the same apprehension. Is it not, then, the duty of our political teachers to cultivate our opinions, to enlighten us, and to prepare us for our duties in whatever awaits us; rather than to silence our enquiries and leave us to drift in the dangerous currents of uncultivated speculations? The great commercial want of this country is a profitable market for the surplus products of our industry. It was the

theory of confederation to supply this want by opening up to us the markets of the sister provinces. I am afraid the results have not thus far greatly increased our scanty manufactures. Our natural market is the American; and we do, and shall suffer, till we gain access to it. Nor would a mere temporary treaty, subject to the caprices of politicians, and entangled with the embarrassments of British Foreign diplomacy afford a full remedy. Manufactures and commerce prosper under permanent as well as liberal tariff arrangements, and it is in vain that you treat them with generosity to-day, if there is apprehension that you may cramp them to-morrow. We require markets. But to confer their full benefits they must be permanent, so that capital may acquire confidence, and seek permanent investments here. Without this state of things, our trade must be limited and manufactures remain exotics among us; and, the exodus of our population remaining about equal to its normal increase, the promise of progress is not cheering. We ought to be manufacturers for this continent, with our cheap labour, cheap living and wonderful natural facilities. We cannot compete against the distance, the skill, the capital and teeming labour of the Old World, and there remains for us but the comparatively petty business of supplying our own sparse populations in unhealthy competition with the great, manufacturing industries of England and America. And it often happens in time of depression, when our struggling manufacturers most need encouragement and support, that we are made a *sacrifice market* for those great countries, to the ruin of our home trade. Our agriculture, is confined to our own markets, or leeches and crippled by the exorbitant exactions of the American Customs Collectors. The development of our mines, too, is prevented by like inhospitable exactions, and we are depleted and impoverished by a paper wall of legislative prohibitions, built along an imaginary line. In this strait it is cold comfort to assure us that the neighbouring trade suffers equally with our own; a fact, nevertheless, modified by this difference,—that the aggregate of their commerce is so much greater than ours. It would be idle to doubt, that these influences have contributed to produce the present languishing trade and universal depression. The last *Canada Gazette* affords the spectacle of forty Insolvents in one week. And the unfortunate list stretches back for months past in alarming proportions. The emigration of common labourers to the States is something actually alarming; and it could not be otherwise, for our water powers are neglected—our mines are closed and we have no means of furnishing employment to our people. Some wise statesman has been understood to exult over the fact, that many

of these poor people go away with the hope of returning; but it is a sad commentary on our hopes for the future, if there are to be no means to remove the stern necessity, the hopeless poverty and want of employment, which drives them, unwilling away. We are told that depression prevails in the States—which is true, but the manufactures are established there, and even the limited production goes on, the markets are supplied, and the poor labourer is employed and paid. It is to him matter of little moment, whether the dividend of the stockholder is small or great, so long as his services are continued and he is enabled to sustain and educate his family. No doubt if a like chance were open to him here, he would return to his native country to-morrow. And for all this, is there no remedy? Tell me which of your statesmen has proposed one. We may drag on as we are, but it were folly to hope for any rapid or general prosperity. The Politicians of Ontario, ignoring the outwards signs—profess to stand in no need of relief; but there is a different feeling in Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. It is said, there is hope of a new Trade Treaty, which would be a great boon, but it must promise *permanence*, to create confidence. We must have free and assured commercial intercourse with the States, and they need it as well as ourselves. I shall be told these theories lead to annexation; and it is true, that so far as our embarrassments relate to commercial intercourse, annexation would supply a remedy. But would it be the best remedy? I think not; and even if it were otherwise, would it be desirable or possible of achievement? I shall speak of this later on. But mine is another scheme and I think a better one for a system of continental trade. I would banish the Custom Houses along the frontier: but I would preserve the imaginary line, as a broad division between two friendly nations, who desire, while maintaining free intercourse, to maintain their autonomy; to work out their own destiny and develop their own free institutions. Before the formation of the Zollverein by Treaty stipulations, the commercial intercourse of the several German States was hampered by disabilities and restrictions similar to those which prevail between us and our neighbours at this moment. The introduction of merchandize from one State to another was not permitted without the payment of duties. In addition to this, numerous prohibitions existed and the trade relations between the contiguous sovereignties were fettered by oppressive and vexatious restrictions. But the inconvenience became manifest and intolerable, and the German States, while retaining their autonomy, introduced a wiser commercial policy. They removed those unnecessary burdens which only tended to clog enterprise and choke the channels of legitimate trade

between contiguous states. They adopted one consolidated Government for commercial purposes, one line of customs on the Geographical boundaries was established,—one tariff, export and transit, was enforced for all, and the revenue thus acquired was distributed among the members of the confederation in proportion to the population of each. This system for a long series of years has given satisfaction in Germany, and it is conceivable that Canada and the United States might adopt something akin to it with mutual and permanent advantage. This would be preferable to any possible Reciprocity Treaty, because it would be absolute and permanent free trade between the two countries. It is preferable again, because it could be more easily obtained, and would indeed be a favourite arrangement with the Americans. It would save both parties immense expense along their frontier, and would disband a vast army of smugglers. It might be effected in six months, and while it would be equally advantageous to our neighbours, it would make Canada a great agricultural, mining, and manufacturing country. It would be popular in the United States because it would please the Free Trader, and Mr. Greely, the great protectionist, has promised us his support. It would settle the Fisheries and give them the free navigation of the St. Lawrence, and it would open half a Continent to their enterprise and capital. It would give us access to the markets of 40,000,000 of people. It would attract to us unlimited capital, and our Country would be dotted with numerous mining and manufacturing villages. Our agricultural and commercial interests would multiply and expand in proportion. Our people would be employed at home, and multitudes of foreign labourers would be attracted from abroad. Happiness and contentment would walk hand in hand with the prosperity of our countrymen. You like the picture, but alas! it has awkward shades; and it is set in an ugly frame. We can't negotiate such a treaty. Canada has great interests, but she has no power. She can exercise no diplomatic functions, because she has no recognized foreign relations. She might attempt it and be snubbed, after the manner of Prince Edward Island. There were those who sneered at my ignorance when I made this statement in the House, because the British Minister had been instructed to consult us in his negotiations. Do they think Mr. Thornton would negotiate this Zollverein for us? No! Because it would conflict with the policy of the Empire. Canada, as a dependency, can never become a party to a Continental Commercial policy here, because it would involve a discrimination against British goods. This is reasonable, and we must not complain of it. It would, indeed, be a vicious system, which would ignore the

interests of the mother Country and discriminate in favour of a foreign power. And yet how egregiously we are the sufferers! There is but one logical remedy, and that brings me again to the same conclusion—a separation from the parent State. Independent, we might accomplish this Commercial advantage. Independent, we might take the staff in our own hands. We should have foreign relations. We could negotiate Treaties. In this sense we should not suffer from the change. We know our own interests, but British diplomacy on this continent has never been a success. It could not be otherwise. Imperial Statesmen have little time to think of us. They are better employed on the restless sea of European complications. But they are wiser than us in the appreciation of our affairs, for they believe and wish, that we should assume our independence and maintain it. We shall grow to it in time if we are patient and discreet. But the pioneers of the movement must bare their bosoms for temporary contumely and reproach. There is a class of people among us, I believe they are not numerous, though the uncertainties of the times are calculated to increase them, who are impatient of half measures, and who desire immediate annexation to the States. To such people I say, what advantages would you derive, that the Zollverein would not afford you? Surely you do not prefer the system of our neighbours to our own British responsible system of government. You are not unmindful of the elevation which national hopes and aspirations would impart to our people. Why not join us and work out that system under improved conditions on this continent? England would gladly consent to our independence and aid us with the perpetual alliance her statesmen have promised. But could she without loss of prestige and honour consent to the alienation of half a continent, and its cession to a foreign power? You only complicate the situation by your impracticable demands. You furnish weapons to the enemy, and you do not serve your own views. If Canada is ever separated from England, it will be at the cannon's mouth, if it be not to establish her sovereign independence. It is better for America, and better for ourselves, that the Dominion should remain autonomous. The United States territories are vast enough, and she can well afford to let us try the experiment of self government. We shall work out a system slightly different from her own, but within the bonds of friendly commercial relations. If her flag floated over the whole continent, where would be the right of asylum in case of civil disorder? And what benefit would she derive from a multitude of people who should enter her councils in a spirit of repining and discontent because they had not been left to develop and glorify their own

nationality. But I must say a word to another class of objectors. There is a powerful party here who represent the United States as overbearing and aggressive. They believe that the inauguration of a commercial Zollverein would be followed by overt acts for our subjection. I believe this statement is unfounded. I have no doubt that judicious negotiations might speedily remove the danger of it, by the guarantee of our status, through the means of a treaty of comity with us between the United States and England; and I have no doubt that early steps should be taken to secure it. But I don't believe it is fair to assert that the Americans are an aggressive people. They are, as a nation, wedded to the arts of peace. Sometimes fillibusters have departed from their shores, but they have never succeeded; and they have never been encouraged by their government. As I have already said, Mexico, Cuba, and the Spanish American States have never suffered from an American spirit of conquest. True, there was a war with Mexico, but with that nation at her feet, the Americans refused her subjugation. With less cause France invaded that country, and attempted to monopolize her government. England, by a happy accident, escaped. But I shall be told that the Monroe doctrine contemplates the unqualified subjugation of the continent, and that the Americans preach that doctrine as Peter the Hermit preached the Crusades. So much has been said of the monstrosities of that doctrine—so many excellent old ladies have been alarmed by it—that perhaps we may profitably enquire what it was, and whether we should really regard it as a standing menace to us and our children? It will, perhaps, startle some people to be told that this doctrine was essentially of British origin, and that it was suggested by Mr. Canning. France had put down the constitutional principles which prevailed in Spain, and entertained the notion of defraying her expenses by acquiring Spanish colonies in South America, and England, indignant at conduct so detrimental to her interests, and with the aversion which Mr. Canning had ever shewn to the Holy Alliance, induced President Monroe to enunciate the doctrine which has since become so famous. The following quotation, from the late edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, will explain what that doctrine really was:—"James Monroe succeeded Madison in the Presidency, and retained it eight years (1817 to 1825.) Towards the close of his administration (1823), in compliance with the suggestion of his Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, he introduced into his message to Congress—adverting to the purpose of the European allies of Spain to assist her in subjugating her revolted colonies in Central and South America—the assertion of a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are in-

"volved, that the American continents, by the free and independent positions, which they have assumed and maintained, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power. * * * * *

"With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power," continues the message, "we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."

Congress took no action upon this; but the spirit of that body and of the nation was in favour of the Monroe doctrine. Lord Brougham, in referring to the President's declaration, stated that it had diffused joy over all free men in Europe; and Sir J. Macintosh spoke of it in the following terms: "This wise Government, in grave but determined language, and with that reasonable and deliberate tone which becomes true courage, proclaims the principles of her policy, and makes known the cases in which the care of her own safety will compel her to take up arms for the defence of other States. I have already observed its coincidence with the declarations of England, which indeed is perfect, if allowance be made for the deeper, or at least more immediate interest in the independence of South America, which near neighbourhood gives to the United States. This coincidence of the two great English commonwealths—for so I delight to call them, and I heartily pray that they may be forever united in the cause of justice and liberty—cannot be contemplated without the utmost pleasure by every enlightened citizen of the earth." Thus it will be seen that the real Monroe doctrine differs entirely from the popular version of it, that it was suggested and heartily endorsed by England, and that it conveys no warning or menace to us. I entertain no doubt that the American Government and people would promote by all convenient means, the independence of this country, and the intimate commercial relations I have suggested, and as will have been seen, my doubts are as few, that England would encourage the arrangement and promote it to every reasonable extent. But even if improved trade relations with our neighbours were impossible, the safest way out of our commercial difficulties is to throw off the restraints of the colonial state. It is conceivable that the tide of European emigration might to some extent, be diverted from the American States, to our own rich and extensive valleys of the North West, but for

the European prejudice against dependent States; and especially the Irish prejudice against British Sovereignty. Disguise it as we may, these are serious drawbacks to our immigration policy, and account in some measure for its practical failure. With the North West peopled, and with facilities of access to it, an important market will be opened to us and a corresponding growth of our manufactures will follow. And as we have already seen, independence would contribute to the establishment of an assured and permanent commercial policy; without which capital will continue to distrust us, and refuse to play its legitimate part in the development of our resources. Independence moreover, would create among us that spirit of self confidence and enterprise which prevails so largely among our neighbours, which has contributed so much to their greatness and which grew out of the national Independence they established. From such a point of view, I have no doubt that here, similar results would flow from similar causes, and that our powers of expansion would be immensely increased, by the higher responsibilities of the position; and though, as I have shown, our natural market is with our neighbours; and our exclusion from them would make our progress towards greatness, comparatively toilsome;—having exhausted all means to establish fair intercourse,—I should by no means despair of my country, if, as I am sure will not happen, that intercourse were refused. But even in that case as in the other, Independence would multiply and accelerate our successes; so that in any way, the gain to us, is in proportion to our growth in manhood and self-reliance. I have already considered the probable influence of Independence upon the character of the people of this country. I have always lamented the want of a Canadian national spirit. I regard it as an elementary truth, that no people can respect themselves or command the respect of others, who have among them no common sentiment of national pride and devotion. It bears to national life a relation, similar to the filial attachment of the domestic circle; and is, at the same time, the glory and the safe guard of a free people. It is painful to remark its absence in this country. You will find national pride here, but, it is an exotic, an importation. It is English or Scotch, Irish French or American; and the disposition to magnify a real Canadian nationality, is too often and unhappily confined to the official, the placeman, whose duty and whose interest it is, to make a proper display before the people. In how many promiscuous gatherings, you might swear the nationality of the Dominion without exciting an apologist or provoking an avenger. But the subject is vast, and grows upon us in the contemplation of it. A full discussion would fill a book instead of a lecture. Time hurries me to a conclusion. This is a great

scheme and your destinies are interwoven with it. I have touched upon some of its general features; you can do the filling up, at your leisure, if you do me the honour, to reflect upon what I have told you. We have seen that the subject is ripe for discussion; and that our vital interests are involved. We have seen that England is embarrassed by her relations to her dependencies here, and that Canada is crippled by the restrictions of the connection. We have seen how our noblest sentiments of loyalty to the Crown may be merged and intensified into loyalty to the Dominion; and how a spirit of national patriotism is indispensable to our growth in enterprise and self-reliance. We have seen how the removal of Imperial tutelage, paved the way for the growth and expansion of the older North American Colonies; and how rapidly, while administering their own resources, they rose into greatness and power. And we have seen how England was immensely the gainer, by this providential change of her relationship to them. I have shown how we might profit by their example—not through revolt and blood shed,—for we find England offering us the boon of independence, which she denied to them,—and thus the way is made easy, through peaceful paths, for the accomplishment of our nationality. I have shown that the proposed state is but a second and necessary step in the great drama of confederation,—and, that it indicates no revolution, no violent distortion of our institutions. I have shown that England desires the change, and that we need it; and that it would happily solve for us great commercial and political problems. I have shown how it might lead to the cultivation of amity between ourselves and our neighbours—how it must tolerate the separate independence of each, while it embraces the widest freedom of commercial relations. I have warned the impetuous reformers, who would prize beyond all this, political alliance—that annexation is impossible,—and the agitation for it an embarrassment; and I have predicted that the Americans will be content with this change, so important and so easy of achievement; and which unlike its alternative, annexation, involves no humiliation to England. I have shown how the vast territories, the important population, and immense resources of this Dominion entitle it to a respectable place among the leading nationalities of the earth; and I have rebuked the critics who sneer at such aspirations, decry our abilities, and prophecy our humiliation and defeat. It may be all a dream; but it is a vision of a great future of wealth and happiness, of power and glory, for our Country. And it is a vision which foretells a fact, and will ere long expand into the region of substantial reality. I have necessarily left untouched several important branches of this great question. The army and navy—the diplomatic arm of

the public service—the whole subject of the public expenditure,—whether the new nationality would increase or diminish it, how best it may be provided, I have left altogether out of this preliminary discussion. It is enough for my present purpose to know that the ninth sovereign power as to population; the fourth as to commerce; and perhaps the first as to territory, and undeveloped resources, will be prepared for the fiscal exigencies of its time. I have left out of the discussion the form of the proposed government of the Dominion. It is enough for my purpose to say that it must be a free system, whether organized as monarchical or republican. Further on in the agitation, we ought to have abundant opportunity to contrast the two systems and discuss them. It might happen that, as with Confederation, our politicians will give us a system, ready made, without troubling the people for opinions, yet the subject has engaged some preliminary attention. The significant fact is stated, that during the negotiations about the Confederation act in England, Sir John A. McDonald advocated the adoption of the word Kingdom instead of Dominion of Canada. And it is well known that a Canadian Monarchy was one of the dreams of the late Mr. D'Arcy McGee, administered by an English prince and dignified by a local nobility. And the able organs of the Hierarchy of Lower Canada, who have cautiously written in favour of Independence, are understood to favour similar views. On the other hand, there will be found those who dread the expenses of Royalty, and who doubt the feasibility of ingrafting feudal forms and pageantry upon the democratic institutions of the new world. Such people see no charms in the extravagance of a court and the re-enactment of the laws of primogeniture for the maintenance of a privileged class. They will tell you that a system which failed in Mexico with France at her back cannot prevail here among the levelling influences of free institutions. But you and I may await the current of events, and prepare for the discussion in due season. It is well for those who agree as to the end to be achieved, to agree also upon the postponement of disturbing collateral issues. We shall find for a time yet, a fierce party to fight,—composed of those numerous and powerful interests which depend upon the maintenance of things as they are; and, embracing as well, no doubt, a large element of disinterested loyalty and honest devotion to the country. I proposed at the outset to speak from no party point of view. My theme is exalted above and beyond the divisions of party;—and barring personal bitterness—my position has been assailed as fiercely by my friends, as by my enemies. But this is not the occasion for recrimination or reply. My dependence is upon the completeness of my argument. I have

strong views as a party man but they have no place in this discussion. I might cross the house to-morrow—if I found my enemies adopting these views, and if my friends should persist in opposing them. There is a grave responsibility resting upon our public men. The country is adrift and the public mind is disquieted. Everybody believes, the finality is not reached and asks, Whither are we drifting? Some suspect that the administration hold peculiar views—but they neither venture to deny nor proclaim them. When I had the honour first to express these opinions on the floor of Parliament, ministers treated me to some personal abuse, but upon the main question they were cautious and silent. There was a profound impression through the house,—but they ventured upon no word of disavowal. Their opinions were shadowed in mystery and they had not the courage to proclaim them. Afterwards when this strange phase of the debate had provoked some comment from the press, Sir George Cartier did indulge in a gentle dissent from my conclusions. No body denies that a change must come; and there remains only the question of time and fitness and preparation. I repeat that public opinion is adrift; and the policy of the administration of the day should be openly avowed and vindicated. If they are opposed to these views, they ought to set their faces boldly and publicly against them. If the time has not arrived, and if they want delay and opportunity to prepare for it, let them openly declare their views and shape their legislation to maintain them. The public could afford to wait, if this dangerous uncertainty were dispelled, and if there were a fixed idea in the popular mind of a definite and desirable future. But grave dangers lurk behind the delays, the doubts and the insecurities of the hour. The truth must be told that we are fast losing our hold upon the loyalty and confidence of our people. Discontent and non-confidence stalk openly among them; and the enemies of our future are encouraged to flaunt

their evil prophecies before our very doors. A national policy, pronounced and progressive, would attract the ear and excite the confidence of the public. They would listen to your appeal, if you supplied them with motives and invoked their sympathies, inspired them with national hopes and aspirations—and their interest in a future they could be proud of, would be like a sheet anchor, to hold them fast to the Dominion. And now gentlemen, I have fulfilled the duty which, I thought, was incumbent upon me, of addressing you some observations, on this absorbing topic of the hour. I have counted the cost and I know the penalty. You have not misunderstood,—but my enemies, as is their custom, will misrepresent and malign me. I shall be neither intimidated nor disheartened. If my views prevail, some of them will join me, before the battle is over. If they are rejected, I have still performed my duty. Sometimes it requires boldness to speak the truth, but there is no power to stifle free discussion in this country. You and I have a right to our opinions, and the right to discuss them. The statesmen of England have set us the example, in the very citadel of the empire. There is no political disability here,—for the councils of the nation are presided over to day, by men,—some of whom lately sought to subvert the government,—and others to promote its immediate annexation. They are loyal citizens now, and so are we. Time changes conditions and works marvels, and time will accomplish the great destiny of this country,—and let us hope, in a manner most conducive to the happiness of its people. In such a case, though my theories should be exploded, my hopes would be fulfilled. Let us hope, too, whatever betides,—in this greater crisis of our history,—for an era of advancing intelligence—of brotherhood and toleration among us. And let us prayerfully commend our country, its future, its people, to the gracious protection and guidance of the great Father of Nations.







